

range from \$8,000 to \$25,000. We want to alleviate these costs so that all children are given the chance to belong to a family.

The bill would allow penalty-free withdrawals of up to \$5,000 from IRAs for adoption expenses. In recent years, Congress has allowed penalty-free withdrawals for home expenses and college education. The Families First Act would allow people to save the penalty money from early IRA withdrawal and put it toward their children's education. Our bill would enable families to borrow money from themselves to start a family, as opposed to taking out a second mortgage or depleting their savings accounts.

It would also repeal the December 31, 2001 sunset for Employer-Supported Adoption benefits and make it permanent law. The Families First Act would exclude, for taxation purposes, any adoption benefits people have received from their employer. It is imperative that employers are supportive when employees decide to give a child a home, whether through adoption or birth. Many businesses provide adoption benefits to their employees, and we should do all we can to further promote these benefits.

The Families First Act is a bipartisan bill that emphasizes the importance of placing families first. When it comes to providing a child with a loving home, families must come first—not the IRS. By increasing the options for parents struggling to afford the high costs of adoption, the Families First Act will increase the number of children who will finally have a place to call home next Father's Day.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 213, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

HONORING DR. ROCCO MARTINO ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to my good friend and colleague, Dr. Rocco Leonard Martino, on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Dr. Martino is a pioneer and international authority in the planning and use of computers, as well as a member of the board of Rome's prestigious Gregorian University.

Highlights of Dr. Martino's career include graduating Summa Cum Laude from the University of Toronto in Mathematics and Finance, earning a Ph.D. from the Institute of Aerospace Studies for work in the re-entry of Space Vehicle and receiving an honorary doctorate from Neuman College in 1993 for his contributions in Information Technology. Dr. Martino served as a Professor of Mathematics and Engineering at the University of Waterloo and at New York University, is the founder

and Chairman of the Board of CyberNet Group, Inc. and recently completed 25 years of service as Chairman and CEO of XRT, Inc. In his role as a board Member on Rome's Gregorian University he serves as a consultant in the designing of one of the most advanced academic computer systems in the world. A devout Catholic, Dr. Martino is a leader in his local parish, St. Katherine of Siena in Wayne, PA and was formerly president of the Fathers' Club at both St. Aloysius Academy and St. Joe's Prep. Dr. Martino has managed to find a balance between two of his passions, theology and technology, and has contributed enormously to both fields.

Dr. Martino is nothing less than a visionary whose inventions and ideas are bringing computer technology into the next millennium. Yet, even though his scholarly title abbreviations run the alphabet in length (literally 26 letters long,) Dr. Martino will be the first to tell you that the most important thing in his life is not his inventions or titles, but his family. He is the embodiment of hard work, integrity and vision and I applaud his dedication to both his work and his family. I am proud to have Dr. Martino as my constituent, but I am even more honored to have him as my friend.

HONORING MRS. MARIE CRUMP

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary woman, Mrs. Marie Crump, as she celebrates a birthday and as the community celebrates her years of leadership and service to Prince George's County.

Mrs. Crump began her service to Prince George's County in the 1950s when she became active in the 14th District Democratic Club and was elected treasurer. She also became quite active with the Young Democrats and soon distinguished herself as an invaluable resource of effort and knowledge.

In addition to volunteering for campaigns, Mrs. Crump also volunteered her time in service to Prince George's County's nonprofit community. She served as the local chair for the Red Cross, The Community Chest and the March of Dimes. In 1962, Mrs. Crump was selected as the Mother's March Chair for Birth Defects of Prince George's County and served in that capacity for 5 years.

As she retired in 1979 from an illustrious career with the County Treasurer's Office, she joined the Board of Directors for the Prince George's Civic Opera and has since devoted countless hours to its development for the enrichment and enjoyment of all Prince Georgians.

Mrs. Crump has spent over 40 years working to improve Prince George's County for all her citizens. She has made a profound impact on all those with whom she has worked and her life has been an example of the noblest of ideals—that of service to others.

Today, on behalf of the citizens of Prince George's County, I offer our thanks and our deepest gratitude for Mrs. Crump's lifelong work and I wish her the best as we recognize the magnitude of the difference she has made and as she celebrates her birthday with family and friends.

TAIWAN AID INITIATIVE TO HELP KOSOVAR REFUGEES

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, the President of the Republic of China recently made a statement which I believe would be of interest to my colleagues. On June 7th, President Lee Teng-hui announced that the Republic of China will donate US \$300 million to help Kosovar refugees rebuild their homes.

More than 782,000 ethnic Albanians have been forced to leave Kosovo since Yugoslav troops began ethnic cleansing in the region. Among them, 443,000 refugees fled to Albania and some 247,000 swarmed to Macedonia. The aid package will include emergency supplies for Kosovar refugees and contributions to long-term reconstruction efforts by the international community in Kosovo now that a peace plan has been accepted. Moreover, it also offers to arrange for Kosovar refugees to receive short-term technical training in Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Republic of China as a member of the world community for their continued commitment to protecting and promoting human rights. The announcement was both timely and insightful, fully demonstrating the ROC's concern for peace in the world. I submit the text of President Lee Teng-hui's statement to be printed in the RECORD.

PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT REGARDING ASSISTANCE TO KOSOVAR REFUGEES

The huge numbers of Kosovar casualties and refugees from the Kosovo area resulting from the NATO-Yugoslavia conflict in the Balkans have capture close world-wide attention. From the very outset, the government of the ROC has been deeply concerned and we are carefully monitoring the situation's development.

We in the Republic of China were pleased to learn last week that Yugoslavia President Slobodan Milosevic has accepted the peace plan for the Kosovo crisis proposed by the Group of Eight countries, for which specific peace agreements are being worked out.

The Republic of China wholeheartedly looks forward to the dawning of peace on the Balkans. For more than two months, we have been concerned about the plight of the hundreds of thousands of Kosovar refugees who were forced to flee to other countries, particularly from the vantage point of our emphasis on protecting human rights. We thereby organized a Republic of China aid mission to Kosovo. Carrying essential relief items, the mission made a special trip to the refugee camps in Macedonia to lend a helping hand.

Today, as we anticipate a critical moment of forth-coming peace, I hereby make the following statement to the international community on behalf of all the nationals of the Republic of China:

As a member of the world community committed to protecting and promoting human rights, the Republic of China would like to develop further the spirit of humanitarian concern for the Kosovar refugees living in exile as well as for the war-torn areas in dire need of reconstruction. We will provide a grant aid equivalent to about US \$300 million. The aid will consist of the following:

1. Emergency support for food, shelters, medical care, and education, etc for the Kosovar refugees, living in exile in neighboring countries.